4:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1951 FL6 Dorobo FL6

In 1938 and 1939 I made a census of the three Dorobo districts which were still inhabited, which showed that out of a total of 226 surviving members of the Kipkurerek horde, 67 % were living in the forest or on farms close to it. The remaining 33 % were settled in groups in certain areas of Nandi (where they had been for many years, having gone there by private arrangement with the Nandi), and in Uasin Gishu, with a few in the Kamasya and Keyo Reserves. Most of these 33 % maintained fairly constant contact with the forest people, and all were recognized as members of one or other of the three Dorobo districts. Under these conditions it is surprizing that they have retained so much of their traditional organization; but the disruption of their life accounts for some of the difficulties experienced in studying them, and for some of the gaps in the record. Nevertheless it was not too late in 1938 to gain a record which, however imperfect, does substantially increase our knowledge of the Dorobo.

The dispersal of the Dorobo made it necessary to classify the people according to their domiciles, and this resulted in a grouping of the horde in four "domicile categories":

A. Inside the forest, at an altitude of 8000 ft. and over.
B. Farmland on the edge of the forest, mostly over 7500 ft. and within a mile of the trees.
C. Farmland or Nandi Reserve within 10 miles of the forest, with natural conditions generally similar to B, but a little lower.
D. Keyo, Kamasya, and Laikipya, where conditions in places are similar to B.

An analysis of the census and domicile categories will be found in the Appendix p. 8.

Since in this paper we can deal only with those parts of the social organization that concern the family and clan, a short summary of other aspects of Dorobo life may be helpful. The social and political life of the Dorobo is based on the clan, which has its own council to deal with internal affairs, and even to-day people live in clan groups. This is contrast to the Nandi, where the clans are dispersed and play but a small part in outward political life. The forest is divided into nine districts or parishes (*koret*, plur. *korosuek*) of which only three are now inhabited. These districts, from north to south, are: 1. Cepurur[1]; 2. Kelpui; 3. Sirua; 4. Kipkorom; 5. Sosoiyo; 6. Meteitei; 7. Mokopic; 8. Puret; 9. Sangalo. In 1938-40 only Kelpui, Kipkorom, and Sosoiyo were inhabited; the latter had been amalgamated with Meteitei. Each district had a council, which dealt with matters appertaining to the district as a whole irrespective of clans. The Dorobo never acquired the council habit of the Nandi; district councils were held only when there was something important to talk about; and the clan council was both a more frequent and less formal affair than the district council.

There is no chief of the horde, nor an elected chief or leader in either clan or district council, the leading man (*kirwokindet* — the councillor)

[1] *C — ch* in English 'church', and is used with this value throughout.

4:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1951 FL6 Dorobo FL6

gaining his position through the tacit recognition of the people. The horde therefore consists of a loosely integrated group of districts held together partly because they "are all Dorobo", but much more by the clan-solidarity which extends across the district boundaries. The clan is thus a far more important institution than it is among the Nandi.

The Dorobo are a hunting people who have been forced to take up agriculture, and at the same time are in process of acquiring a small amount of live stock. A great deal of their culture and most of their language have been borrowed from the Nandi; but their habits and mental characteristics are their own, including a "hunting outlook" which contrasts with the "cattle outlook" of the pastoralist, and a feeling of sympathy with wild animals that does not exist among either pastoralists or agriculturalists. Next in importance to hunting come bees, and honey is regarded much as pastoral people regard milk.

Although the Dorobo are commonly thought of as a people who wander at will wherever there is game, this notion is true only to a limited extent. Parties used to go far afield in the old days seeking game outside their own territory in the sparsely inhabited areas of the highlands; but their own forest was and still is divided into strictly observed economic areas where are family holdings in which people hunt, set traps, keep their bees, and collect vegetable food. These areas may look small on the map; but anyone who thinks that half an inch on a map (representing perhaps one mile on the ground) seems a very short distance, will find when he gets to the forest that one mile on the ground is a very formidable tract offering all sorts of possibilities for the hunter, and infinite chances for the stranger to lose himself.

Appendix

Analysis of the Census

District	Single men	Married men	Women	Male children	Female children	Totals
Kiplorum	8	6	15	10	10	49
Sosoiyo	22	19	26	16	19	102
Kelpui	25	19	17	9	5	75
	55	44	58	35	34	226

Analysis of Domicile Categories

Domicile Category	Kiplorum	Sosoiyo	Kelpui	% of Total	Totals
A	0	13	0	6	13
B	33	59	46	61	138
C	16	24	17	25	57
D	0	3	12	7	15
Unknown	0	3	0	1	3
	49	102	75	100	226

5:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1954 FL6 Dorobo FL6

These of course are relatively small settlements; but there were more people living round and inside the forest in 1927, and a number of them has been scattered owing to the effect of the 1937 move. The manner in which clan settlements are distributed may be seen from the map.

3. The Koret

The methods by which primitive people govern themselves and maintain law and order can usually be studied in operation, even if they are not immediately obvious to the casual visitor. The observation of concrete facts and events can elucidate even the uncentralized organizations that are so difficult to understand, and so common in East Africa, where there may often be no chiefs, and no visible authority but groups of old men. Some of the more important peoples of Kenya, like the Masae, Nandi, and Akamba had systems of this type, and the Dorobo also were similarly organized. But in the case of the Dorobo the difficulties in the way of investigation were greatly increased as a result of the move of 1937, an action which it was hoped would place the Dorobo in more favourable conditions and increase their chances not only of cultural advancement, but of ultimate survival; and in 1939 I was told that no *koret* council had been held since before 1937. I was therefore unable to observe this aspect of Dorobo life, and the account of their district organization that follows is based on their own statements. Information was obtained from a number of senior Dorobo, and it was possible to check their statements to a certain extent, so that taken in conjunction with the information I collected in 1927 the somewhat slight and unavoidably incomplete picture is, I think, correct as far as it goes.

The Dorobo are divided into three age-grades: *apaiisiek*, elders; *murenik*, circumcised men; and *netik*, boys. The *apaiisiek* and *murenik* are those who take part in public affairs; *netik* have no voice in them. Women, too, though they have the grades of *engitokisiek*, old women; *yosotik*, married women; and *tipik*, girls; have no official share in public affairs; however much influence they may have at home over their husbands and relatives. Neither they nor boys may attend council meetings, unless they happen to be major participants in some affair, as for instance, when a widow accuses someone of an offence against her.

The Dorobo divide their forest country into a number of districts called *koret*, pl. *korosuek*. The names of nine districts are recorded, and these are, from north to south:

1. Cepurur, on the northern edge of the forest.
2. Kelpui: the NW corner of the forest.
3. Sirua: south of Kelpui.
4. Kipkorom: from Sirua to the SW corner of the forest.
5. Sosoiyo: east of Kipkorom.
6. Meteitei: between the forest and the Meteitei river.
7. Mokopic: east of Kipkorom.
8. Puret: east of Sirua.
9. Sangalo: east of Sirua.

5:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1954 FL6 Dorobo FL6

634 [161] [178] To-day, only three of these districts are inhabited, Kelpui, Kipkorom and Sosoiyo (with which Meteitei has been amalgamated). The inhabitants of the empty *korosuek* have joined the three inhabited districts, gone right away, or died.

These *korosuek* correspond with the Nandi *korotinuek* (sing. *koret*) as the administrative units, the difference being that the Dorobo districts are larger than those of the Nandi, and that they consist mostly of forest, or forest with a strip of open land in front of it, whereas the Nandi districts are mostly parkland with patches of forest in places. Each Dorobo *koret* had its council, *kiruoket*, with a leader or spokesman, *kiruokindet* or *apaiyet*, "the old man". The *kiruokindet* was not a chief at all, as we understand the word. He held his position, not by descent, nor by election, but, as the Dorobo expressed it, by *ueliepta kitio*, "by the power of his tongue only", or more precisely, by virtue of his age, character, personality, and ability. Nor did the *kiruokindet* act for the whole horde. Each council was independent so far as its decisions went; but the interacting ties of clanship, the sense of "being Dorobo" fostered by isolation and suspicion of the outside world, and the absolute need for Dorobo to stick together, united them more than one might expect, and certainly more than the nebulous authority of a horde-chief could have done.

634 673 622 [186]

In 1939 no *koret* council met, as far as I know, and there was nobody then holding the office of *kiruokindet* in any of the three districts. I learned, however, that the last *kiruokindet* of Kipkorom was one Cemuren arap Cepsuku, a Kimnyike, who died some years before my visit, and might perhaps have been 55 years old when he was in office; that the last *kiruokindet* of Sosoiyo had been Kipkatam arap Ngamngam, who was still alive in 1939, aged about 80, and was said to have been *kiruokindet* at the time of the last Nandi War in 1905, which would make him about 45 when he took office, which he resigned before 1925; and that the last *kiruokindet* of Meteitei was Neascas arap Meirica, a Kipkoiimet who died "many years ago", and must have been over sixty at the time of the Nandi War. The phrase "in office" must not be taken too literally: there was nothing official about a Dorobo *kiruokindet*, and he was really no more than a primus inter pares who from his character and personality was looked upon as a fit person to listen to.

634 633 [182] 177

These facts would seem to indicate that not only had no council been held since before 1937, but that the system itself was already beginning to fall into disuse independently of the move of 1937, its place being taken more and more by the clan council. I think there is no doubt that the *koret* council was a feature acquired from the Nandi, and that while the Nandi lived close to the Dorobo it functioned smoothly. But the Nandi were cleared away from the forest in 1906, and for a time there was a break in their residential contact with the Dorobo. After a time, they began to come back, in smaller numbers than before, and only as squatters on the farms into which the area had meanwhile been divided; but as a result of this short break the Dorobo had lost some of their familiarity with them, and their characteristic shyness had taken its place. I noticed that when Dorobo

5:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1954 FL6 Dorobo FL6

were having a meeting of any sort, however informal, at which they wanted to speak of anything important, they were careful to exclude Nandi from it; and if a Nandi insisted on intruding, they would talk only of trivial matters till he had gone. One day when I was talking to some Dorobo about their land, they insisted on my sending out of earshot a Nandi who was with me — they even took me out of his sight and spoke in low voices, for the subject was too serious to be heard and perhaps ridiculed by a Nandi. It is thus not difficult to understand how an acquired feature like the *koret* can fall into disuse; and this is what I believe has happened among the Dorobo. Pressure of various kinds was by 1927 forcing the Dorobo to be more wary than ever, and the clan system could give them all the administrative organization they needed. Hence the *koret* council could lapse, and with it the office of *kirnokindet*, though the *koret* names remained, as they had become useful terms of reference.

Nevertheless, the *koret* council is closely associated with the punishment of crime, and it is therefore necessary to understand something of the way in which it did its work in the past.

All the elders and circumcised men of a district formed the council. They met at the foot of a tree where the undergrowth was cleared away to make an open space. Any tree would do, for unlike the Nandi they had no special trees which mark the *korosuek*. The functions of the *koret* council were described briefly by a Dorobo in the following words: *Keruoc walek si kesic ce miyac ak ce yac, si kokas pik tukul. Ingoesio clt ake tukul, keoon si kua emet ake*, "We take counsel that we may find what is good and leave what is bad so that all men may understand. If any man refuses, he is driven out of our country". Questions of theft and homicide were discussed by the council; it considered what steps to take when food was scarce; and disputes of all sorts between people of different clans were heard and settled. The decision of the council was announced by the *kirnokindet*, who after sensing the opinion of the meeting, would stand up and say what ought to be done. It was then left to the people concerned to carry out the suggestion, for such it was, in effect, rather than an order.

The way in which the law is enforced is liable to be something of a puzzle to the casual observer. The mainspring of Dorobo political organization is public opinion, and behind public opinion is the fear of the dead. People know that it is wrong, that is, contrary to custom, to do a certain thing; they know also that if they do it, their friends will do someting unpleasant to them, and, what is really most important of all, they know that *mecome cesowiloi*, "the spirits of the dead disapprove". Hence in order to understand how Dorobo law works, one must know something about their religious beliefs. To the European these reasons no doubt seem feeble; but they are effective in that the Dorobo have been able to survive till to-day as a unit sufficiently law-abiding to hold its own and carry on its existence in face of human and non-human enemies, and to maintain its place as a living organization.

Among people like the Nandi, the council habit has become an almost daily business, has in fact almost come to be the equivalent of a club, though without the conviviality of a club; but this is not possible for people who

/247 cont./

278 When the cooking of the poison is finished, the pot is cleaned
415 with sand and water and used again for the preparation of food. The
252 arrow point is thoroughly cleaned, heated red-hot, and poisoned anew.
[411] The region in question for hunting has been divided by the El
224 dorobo into definite districts, each of which may be hunted in only
[634] the community of its inhabitants. A district, in turn, consists of a
[631] number of precincts, whose grassy plains are burned off in a sequence following from their location, the weather conditions, etc. The wild animals then gather to graze on the grass soon freshly sprouting after the burning. This management explains why the hunter is only rarely /248/ forced to return home without booty and why he is able to feed his family continuously and regularly from the yields of his hunting.

The game in general in East Africa is game frequenting the same spot; but the meaning of this statement must be modified in accordance with the relatively enormously large areas here. Just as in Germany a hunter expects a herd of deer at a particular time on a particular knoll, the ol doroboni can quite certainly count on finding the game expected by him at the appropriate time in a region whose diameter amounts to approximately 3-5 kilometers. Considerable disturbances
[136] are caused, of course, by the appearance of large predatory animals, especially lions almost always hunting in herds and the hyena dogs always hunting together in larger numbers.

In practicing hunting the men split up in such a way that the younger ones do the stalking on the open steppe, whereas the older ones lie in wait at the watering places of the game. Stalking requires incomparably greater endurance and skill than at home. The ol doroboni must more accurately watch the wind, since his own strong odor makes it extremely easy for the animal to pick up the scent. He must take the greatest pains to conceal himself from the sight of the animal, since he is unfamiliar with any kind of adaptation to the region and the surroundings, so that his black body stands out clearly, even at great distances, on the usually light yellow steppe. The difficulty of the rush is further increased by the primitive nature of his weapons, which permit him to make an accurate shot only at 20 to 30 meters. In what concerns the patience, perseverence, and dexterity that the Wandorobo show in this, a European hunter can